FSSAI tightens the noose around eateries without food license

Dated:- 14.11.2017 (Tuesday)

New Delhi, Nov 14 () Food safety regulator FSSAI today warned that hotels and restaurants operating without its license will be sealed and closed if they fail to take permits in the next 3 months.

The rule for license also applies to those establishments, including religious places, where food is not charged. However, petty manufacturers, retailers and hawkers, among others, are exempt from this.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said it will first ask states to run a special drive to create awareness among food business operators about the compulsory requirement of licenses.

"I am told that 30-40 per cent of our restaurants and hotels do not have FSSAI licenses. If this is the law of the land, is it acceptable?" he asked at a FICCI conference on food service retail 'Foodzania 2017' here.

Stating that there is some confusion in businesses on whether the FSSAI license is mandatory, Agarwal made it clear that it is compulsory for all food businesses and non-compliance is not justified.

"Since there is still some confusion, we are asking state governments to take up a special drive. After the time period for that is over, we are advising them to seal and close all such units across the country if they fail to take FSSAI licenses," he said.

FSSAI Enforcement Director, Agarwal said, has been tasked with ensuring 100 per cent licensing of restaurants and hotels in the next three months. He made it clear that there will be "no comprise at all".
Stating that FSSAI license is needed for food business even if the food is not charged, he said that "even in temples, they are supposed to have FSSAI licenses or registration, depending on the size of the business. Therefore, there is no option".

He further said that after taking the license, food businesses also need to comply with all the regulations such as submission of food safety management plan.

As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, no person shall commence or carry out any food business except under a license.

Under the law, food business means any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out activities related to any stage of manufacturing, processing, packaging, storage, transportation, distribution of food, import and includes catering services, sale of food or ingredients.

According to the FSSAI CEO, the regulator will soon make it mandatory for all food businesses to have at least one person as food safety supervisor who has to be trained and certified as per its curriculum.

Agarwal stressed that food operators should display their license at prominent points on their premises. The display board at any restaurant should also have contact details of customer care as well as food inspector of that location.

The FSSAI is working on developing rating for "hygiene and hygiene plus" and the same will be out soon.

The food watchdog has been in operation for the last six years and by now, all hotels and restaurants should have secured the license, Agarwal added.